



Wednesday, February 19, 2014

Metropolitan Development Commission
City County Building
200 E Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: 5915/5925 N. College Ave. 2013-CZN-821; 2013-CVR-821

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Midtown Indianapolis Inc., I write in support of the petition for rezoning and variance from development standards for redevelopment of the properties at 5915 and 5925 N. College Avenue inclusive of C-2 uses.

Midtown Indianapolis, Inc. in partnership with the Department of Metropolitan Development and numerous neighborhood organizations has conducted extensive community visioning sessions involving hundreds of residents over the past 6 years in an effort to determine the type of development and uses desired at various commercial nodes throughout Midtown. Midtown is a district which is comprised of dozens of commercial nodes surrounded by largely residential property. This typology is an inherent part of the character and desirability of Midtown Indianapolis. Planning efforts have specifically targeted these commercial nodes for reinvestment, redevelopment, and strengthening as a core component of a district wide quality of life plan that seeks to mitigate two decades of population loss, disinvestment, and overall decline in our once thriving community.

The Envision Broad Ripple plan is a central component of Midtown area planning efforts. Broad Ripple's unique status as an economic engine and destination within Midtown required careful thought and planning for the preservation and growth of its unique character. These planning efforts included advanced analysis of the development prospects and challenges facing key commercial corridors and nodes, including College Avenue. Residents at the time identified nodes along College Avenue, including the College and Kessler Node, as a priority for reinvestment, infrastructure improvements, increased residential density and mixed-use/transit oriented development. The goal is to enhance daytime and general consumer traffic in Midtown in targeted areas and to provide increased stability for the area's local business economy. Office uses at key commercial nodes are particularly needed as Midtown seeks to become a community that enables its residents to both live and work in the district. The repurposing of existing structures can accommodate certain office uses; however, additional stock which is suited for modern office demands is very much needed.

As further evidence of the desire for increased investment and development at key nodes and commercial corridors, the subject properties were included in the North Midtown Economic Development Area (EDA) established by the Metropolitan Development Commission and the City-County Council in 2011. The EDA and associated EDA Plan adopted by the city specifically call for special attention to primary transportation corridors (College Ave.) and it encourages the increased prevalence of mixed uses, and more intense "node focused" redevelopment. The Tax Increment Finance District also approved within the EDA in 2013 was as part of a specific economic development strategy to increase the scale of redevelopment and/or reinvestment. In fact the EDA Plan is intended to provide additional guidance for zoning, land-use and other consideration of properties within the Economic Development Area. The petitioner has done well to consider many of the core recommendations of the EDA Plan including many of the forty-three development and design guidelines and node/transit centric development.

We recognize that concerns have been expressed about the potential impact of this project to lead to the commercialization of "residential" areas. Also, the Envision Broad Ripple Plan and the EDA Plan seem to call for both the preservation of stable residential housing and the intensification of commercial nodes, particularly those along key transit routes. While this

may appear to some as a conflict, we believe that considered in context, no conflict exists. The EDA Plan advises to look for rational boundaries in which to consider commercial expansion. A cursory examination of the boundaries of adjacent commercial property near the subject site, shows that the petitioners request is a rational expansion of commercial boundaries within a long established commercial node. A further examination of commercial nodes along College Avenue and throughout Midtown will demonstrate many examples boundaries similar to those proposed by the petitioner at the College and Kessler node.

The Midtown area has lost 28.1 percent of its share of the Marion County population over the past twenty years. We have suffered a 95 percent increase in vacancy in the same period. While there are many factors influencing this migration, much of it results from a lack of investment in developments, like this one, which offer the next evolution of development configuration and diversified commercial property stock. The unique position of this site situated along a primary transportation corridor and within the rational boundaries of a commercial node enable it to serve a significant role in the return of Broad Ripple to a modern version of the dense, urban, transit oriented community that it once was. As such, we believe the petitioner's project advances the long term goals and objectives of the Broad Ripple Village Association, Midtown Indianapolis, Inc. and Marion County at large.

It is important to note that the petitioners have worked extensively with the Broad Ripple Village Association in an effort to find a feasible redevelopment configuration for the site. Previously proposed and more intense commercial uses have been scaled back. The resulting proposed petition has evolved in both design and configuration to reach a mutually beneficial balance of community desire and development viability. Given the project's alignment with local community, district, and city plans we respectfully ask for your support of the petition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. McKillip". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael A. McKillip
Executive Director